

**MINUTES**

OF THE

**GENERAL SYNOD**

OF THE

**REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,**

**SESSION SEVENTEENTH,**

**HELD IN THE CITY OF PITTSBURGH,**

**October, 1834.**

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**WITH AN APPENDIX, CONTAINING**

**TWO OVERTURES:**

**I. On the 'Jury Act,'**

**II. On the Magistrate's Power,**

**CIRCA SACRA.**

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**NEWBURGH.**

**PRINTED BY C. U. CUSHMAN,**

**1834.**





# MINUTES

OF THE

## GENERAL SYNOD.

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PITTSBURGH, Oct. 8th, 1834.

Synod met agreeably to adjournment, at 7 o'clock, P. M. The Moderator, Rev. John Cannon, opened the meeting with a Sermon on the subject assigned him, from Rom. 13, i. "*Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers; for there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.*" After sermon, the Court was constituted by the Moderator with prayer.

Adjourned to meet same place, to-morrow at 9 o'clock A. M.

Same place, 9th Oct. 9 o'clock A. M.

The Court met and was constituted with prayer. The members of the present Synod were ascertained, when it appeared that there were present from the

### SOUTHERN PRESBYTERY,

#### MINISTERS.

REV. R. GIBSON,  
" J. R. WILLSON, D. D.  
" C. B. M'KEE,  
" M. RONEY,  
" D. SCOTT,

#### RULING ELDERS.

MR. JOHN HOUSTON.

### NORTHERN PRESBYTERY.

S. M. WILSON.

### OHIO PRESBYTERY.

" JOHN WALLACE,	" ABRAHAM PATTERSON,
" D. STEELE,	" CHAS. TONER,
" J. B. JOHNSON,	" ALEX. FOSTER.

### PITTSBURGH PRESBYTERY.

" JOHN CANNON,	" THOS. GEMMIL,
" JAS. BLACKWOOD,	" SAM'L STERRIT,
" THOS. SPROULL,	" NATHAN JOHNSTON.
" WM. SLOANE,	" SAM'L WYLIE.

From the Western Presbytery no representation.

The Rev. Robert Gibson, was chosen Moderator; Moses Roney, Clerk, Thomas Sproull, Assistan Clerk.

The minutes of last meeting were read, and corrected. Papers were called for, received and numbered as follows: No. 1. A memorial from three Ruling Elders of the Greenfield Session. No. 2. A memorial from several members of the Greenfield congregation.

Resolved, That Presbyteries have leave to report.

Two papers, the one signed G. M'Millan, the other Geo. Hartin, were laid on the table. As they were not directed to this court, it was moved and seconded, that they be returned. A division was called for so as to take the question on the papers separately. The paper signed G. M'Millan was ordered to be returned. The farther consideration of the motion was deferred for the present, and on motion it was,

Resolved, That the paper signed Geo. Hartin be referred to a committee of three, to make enquiry respecting it and report on the propriety of its reception. Cannon, Roney and Gemmil were appointed the committee, Steele and Houston were added by vote of court.

Adjourned, to meet same place, 3 o'clock P. M.

Same place, 3 o'clock P. M.

Synod came to order and constituted. All the members present. Minutes read. The Moderator announced the following standing committees: 1. On unfinished business,—Blackwood and Wallace. 2. On Discipline,—Cannon, Roney and Wylie. 3. On Signs of the Times,—Steele, Scott and Sterrit. 4. On Synodical and Presbyterial Reports,—Dr. Wilson, M'Kee and Gemmil. 5. Foreign correspondence, Roney, Sproull and Houston. 6. Finance,—S. M. Willson, Toner, and N. Johnston. 7. Theological Seminary—Sloane, J. B. Johnston and Patterson.

The committee to whom was referred the paper signed Geo. Hartin, reported. Their report was accepted and adopted, as follows:

"The committee \* \* \* \* \* report, that in their judgment the paper is inadmissible for the following, with other reasons:

1st. The paper is not addressed to us; and this seems to have arisen, not through inadvertence, but deliberate intention.

2nd. In part of the body of the paper, the name of an individual, professing to act as pastor of the congregation, from which this paper purports to come, is identified with the people under the name "Teacher," while they style themselves the "taught," shewing plainly to your committee, that the paper was got up under his influence.



3d. It is plainly stated, that those, who profess to memorialize you, intend to act in a similar manner towards those, who have gone out from us, called by them the 11th St. Synod.

The Western Synod and the Ohio Presbytery, respectively presented their reports, Nos. 3 and 4.

Resolved, That the papers laid on the table be read and disposed of.

No. 1. was read, accepted and referred to the committee on Discipline.

No. 2. was read and ordered to lie for the present on the table.

No. 3. was read, accepted and referred to the committee on Synodical and Presbyterial Reports. The following are extracts :

“ Our next” (second) “ stated meeting was held in Pittsburgh, September 2, 1833. At this meeting, the Libel against Dr. Black, referred by you, was taken up and disposed of as follows : The Synod consider his conduct, in the disorderly course which he pursued at the meeting of General Synod in Philadelphia, and in withholding from that court its papers, *highly censurable*—yet, taking into consideration, that the General Synod did, (“ by resolution”) declare—that those who formerly belonged to, but have now withdrawn from us, are “ prohibited from holding a seat in our court, or exercising authority, or any way interfering, in the judicatories or congregations of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, while maintaining such principles or pursuing such practices,”—Therefore

Resolved, That this court consider it unnecessary to proceed in the prosecution of the Libel.

The Pittsburgh Presbytery reported to us the ordination of Messrs. John Crozier and Thomas Sproull, and the Ohio Presbytery, the ordination of Mr. John Wallace.

The Synod transferred the Rev. Robert Wallace from the Pittsburgh to the Ohio Presbytery.

For farther and more particular information, relative to the state of our church in the West, we beg leave to refer you to the reports of the Presbyteries respectively.

We doubt not, Rev. Fathers and Brethren, you will be gratified in hearing of our harmony and increasing attachment to our Covenanted Reformation Testimony.”

No. 4. was read, accepted and referred to the committee on Synodical and Presbyterial Reports, except so much as relates to matters of Discipline. This to committee on Discipline. The following are extracts from this document :



The Reformed Presbytery of Ohio beg leave to report—That, in the wise and gracious providence of our common Lord, our organization has been preserved. We have been recently called, in common with our covenant fathers and brethern, to “sing of mercy and of judgment,” with reference to peculiar circumstances. But in the way of his mercies, rather than of his judgments, have we been permitted to wait for him. We have experienced the chastisement of our Heavenly Father. This has been followed by some fainting; while we have much ground to conclude, that the peaceable fruits of righteousness have been increased thereby, among those who continue to hold fast the word of Christ’s patience.

We believe there is a growing love to our Testimony, among the people under our care. Evidences of this may be gathered from their edifying conversation—their mutual and fervent love, especially when called publicly to seal their covenant with God and with one another:—their punctuality in attending upon God in the public, social and private ordinances of his grace.

The calls of our people, for ministerial supply, are very greatly multiplied. Our labors, within the last year, have extended from the Muskingum river in Ohio, to the interior of Illinois, and from Michigan, to the borders of South Carolina.

We have within our bounds seven vacancies, besides places of supply and societies numerous and growing.

Agreeably to your instructions, the Rev. Hugh M’Millan has been stricken off the list of our constituent members of Presbytery.

Since your last meeting, Mr. J. B. Johnston has been ordained and installed pastor of the Miami congregation.

Rev. Fathers and Brethern, we look to you for counsel. In much weakness we have been endeavoring to exercise forbearance and to sympathize with the children of our mother; so far as could be done consistently with faithfulness to our covenant Head and the integrity of our covenanted Testimony.—We can truly say, that a regard for the preservation, pure and entire, of divinely prescribed order, and, that we might not “partake of other men’s sins,” were among the motives influencing us to take the following steps judicially, with some of our ministerial brethren.

A letter of inquiry and notification (of time and place of meeting) had been addressed to the Rev. Gavin M’Millan, the receipt of which he acknowledged in a communication to our

**Moderator.** In reference to said communication, as also to his joint interest with Rev. Ebenezer Cooper, in publishing what is called "a Circular," we proceeded in the manner following, as recorded in our minutes, viz.

"The court refused to receive that document, it not being an answer to the letter addressed to him (Rev. G. M'Millan,) by this Presbytery.

As respects the Circular and the present standing of the Rev. G. M'Millan, Presbytery adopted the following preamble and resolutions :

"Whereas Rev. G. M'Millan, owing to difficulties in his way, is not prepared to take his seat in this Presbytery, Therefore

Resolved, That the said Rev. G. M'Millan has disqualified himself, for the present, by his own act and declaration from co-operating with his brethren in transacting presbyterial business ; and,

Whereas the Rev. E. Cooper, and G. M'Millan have severely censured, in their circular letter, the proceedings of our Synods, viz. the E. S. Synod met, *pro re nata* in Nov. 1832, and by adjournment in April, 1833 ; and our General Synod, met in Cherry-street church, Philadelphia, in August, 1833. And, whereas said Rev. G. M'Millan did publicly affirm in the Ohio Presbytery, on the 29th May, 1834, that, in his opinion, the Synod, which met in Cherry-st. Church, in the manner of its movement from 11th to Cherry-st., acted unpresbyterially ; Therefore

Resolved, That this court refer the cases of both these brethren to the General Synod at its first meeting, to take order therein."

The Report of Synod's Treasurer was presented by Dr. Willson, No. 5. The Pittsburgh Presbytery presented their report. No. 6.

No. 5. was read, accepted and referred to the committee on Finance.

No. 6. was read, accepted and referred to the committee on Synodical and Presbyterial reports.

The following are extracts from this report :

"Since the last meeting of your Reverend body, some things of interest and importance have occurred within our ecclesiastical limits. The names of Dr. Black, J. Gill, T. C. Guthrie, A. W. Black and Geo. Scott, have been stricken from the rolls, in accordance with the views of the Synod, "for corrupting



the doctrines, contemning the authority, and violating the order of the church."

To the loud and pressing demands for ordinances from the congregations vacated by the defection of their pastors, we were unable to give an adequate supply. In three of these congregations, the sacrament of the supper was dispensed in the autumn of 1833. Three ministers have been installed pastors of congregations. Mr. Crozier in the Monongahela congregation; Mr. Blackwood in the united congregations of Little Beaver, Camp Run and West Greenville; Mr. Sproull in the congregation of Pittsburgh.

A comparison of our former, with our present situation, whilst it furnishes cause to lament the diminution of our number, by the defection of former brethren, also presents matter of thankfulness to God, that so many of our *people* remain faithful in the practice, as well as the profession, of Reformation principles. "The Lord hath not dealt with us as we have sinned. In wrath he remembers mercy. We will sing of mercy and of judgment."

We trust the afflictions of our Zion have been sanctified to us. Ministers and people have been roused to more zeal and activity than formerly, in maintaining our Testimony. Our sessions are no longer troubled in dealing with men, who prefer the "gay clothing" of those who "live in kings' houses," to the sackcloth of the witnesses, whilst in their wilderness banishment.

Mr. Walkinshaw, a probationer, certified and dismissed to us by the Southern Presbytery, arrived amongst us near the end of August. His labors have been very refreshing to our destitute people. Mr. M'Kinney has not been transferred to us by the Ohio Presbytery according to your direction.

The people of our charge are scattered over a circle of about 100 miles in diameter, of which Pittsburg is the centre. We have reason to believe, that this section of country would, in regard to morality, bear a comparison with any other in the land. Valuable *old* books are republished in Pittsburg and find ready sale in the adjacent country. The community, in some parts, seem to be awakening to the subject of slavery; denouncing it as a political, moral and national evil. Anti-slavery societies are forming and liberal principles seem to progress.

The various Presbyterian bodies around us are generally Calvinistic in sentiment and strict in discipline. Temperance



societies are popular and are doing much good. Our views in relation to Civil Government, are generally admitted in theory; but, our brethern, of other denominations, say, "they are not good at this time."

Amidst all our discouragements our congregations are growing and we would not wish to despise the day of small things."

The Northern Presbytery reported. No. 7. The report was read, accepted and referred to the committee on Synodical and Presbyterial Reports.

This report, after stating that the business transacted had been chiefly of a local character, and reporting the licensure of Mr. John Holmes, proceeds: "That the provinces on the North present an important field for missionary effort, we are fully convinced from personal observation. We would not disguise the truth, however, that there are obstacles to the prosecution of a mission in that portion of our continent.— There Satan has his seat. He exerts his power in the Popery and Prelacy of these colonies; and, in the various forms, which heresy has there assumed. The abounding wickedness has produced its influence on those, who had received a religious education, before emigrating thither.

Another impediment we can by no means omit. Preachers of the Gospel have not, in all instances, sustained that irreproachable *moral* character, which is indispensable to the success of true religion. There have been examples of this unhappy kind, presented by persons, from whom *we ourselves* had expected better things.

Our settled congregations are gradually increasing in numbers, and we have reason to hope, in experimental piety.— Evidence of this we have in their continued attachment to the Reformation principles of our Covenant fathers, in the regularity with which they wait upon God in the use of the instituted means of grace and in their harmonious and united efforts for the promotion of undefiled religion. The congregation in Topsham is still a vacancy. That in Argyle we recommend to be put under the care of the Southern Presbytery, in view of its proximity to them, and remoteness from us.

We cannot deny ourselves the satisfaction of recording the pleasure, felt in witnessing the indications of Divine Providence on behalf of some of the distinctive features of the church's Testimony. We here refer to the recent movements on the subject of Slavery. And we do this with the greater gratitude, inasmuch as they have occurred at a time, when some, who seemed to be pillars among us, have proved recre-



ant to the cause of Reformation. We have had some opportunity of becoming acquainted with some of the leading anti-slavery men of our bounds, and we have found them employing the same argument on the evils of slavery; and fixing upon the same clauses of the United States' constitution, to show that slavery is a NATIONAL sin, which this church has done from the commencement of its organization in this land.— This is the more worthy of observation, as these individuals have never had an opportunity of knowing the views, which our church has always maintained on this subject. They have never “had their consciences *manufactured*.” They have arrived at the conclusion to which they have come, by the power of truth.

We have every encouragement to “hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, knowing that he is faithful who has promised.”

The Ministers present, and Ruling Elders from congregations not having pastors present, were interrogated as to the observance of the Thanksgiving and Fast Days. The answers were all satisfactory.

Enquiry was also made respecting the observance of the order of the Synod, to take up collections in aid of the fund for the support of superannuated ministers; when it was

Resolved, That though attended to in several congregations, the result is not so satisfactory as might have been reasonably expected; and that the members be enjoined to give all diligence to procure greater punctuality in time to come.

Resolved also, that the Presbyteries be enjoined to see that the collection contemplated above, be taken up annually within their respective bounds.

Adjourned with prayer to meet to-morrow at half past 9 o'clock, A. M.

*Same place, 10th Oct. half past 9 o'clock, A. M.*

Synod met and constituted. All the members present, except Cannon, Houston and Sproull, who came in soon after.

Resolved, That the members, having monies for the traveling fund, be directed to report to the committee on Finance as soon as practicable.

On special motion, the Rev. John Crozier was invited to a seat in the court, as a consultative member. Mr. Crozier took a seat accordingly.

The committee on unfinished business reported. Report accepted, and on motion, the court proceeded to consider the several items in order, when it was found upon enquiry, that



the Book of Discipline had not been published as directed, for want of a copy. The reason was sustained as satisfactory. It also appeared, that the "Causes of Fasting and Thanksgiving" had been published as directed—that Mr. Scott had prepared for the argumentative part of our Testimony a paper on the subject assigned him at the last meeting, viz. "The enforcement of the Jury Act,"—that Mr. Sloane had, as directed, prepared a paper on the "Magistrate's power *circa sacra*;" and that Mr. M'Kee, who had been directed to prepare a "refutation of the Hopkinsian Errors," was not ready to report, as he had been travelling extensively since the time of his appointment. Mr. M'Kee's excuse was sustained and the appointment continued. It also appeared, that the committee appointed to prepare a statement of the reasons why the members of Synod could not meet with those who assembled in the 11th-St. church, Philadelphia, had not fulfilled the appointment; because, in their judgment, such statement was rendered unnecessary, by the appearance of other publications. The reason was sustained and the committee discharged.

Mr. John Renfrew, Jr., a delegate from the Southern Presbytery, presented his certificate and took his seat in court.

Mr. Scott was called upon to submit the paper, which he had prepared on "the enforcement of the Jury Act." He read it accordingly. Synod had a recess of 10 minutes. After the recess, court came to order.

Resolved, That the paper submitted by Mr. Scott be accepted and referred to a committee of three to report thereon. Dr. Willson, Cannon and Wylie were appointed the committee.

Synod resumed the consideration of unfinished business, when it appeared, that no plan had been devised for raising funds in support of a Theological School. The reasons assigned were sustained and the committee discharged.

On the resolution concerning "occasional hearing," offered at last meeting, some remarks were made, when, on motion, Synod Adjourned to meet at 3 o'clock, P. M.

*Same place, 3 o'clock, P. M.*

Synod met and constituted. All the members present. Minutes read.

The consideration of the report of the committee on unfinished business was resumed.

On motion, the part of the report under consideration (respecting the resolution on "occasional hearing,") was amended, so as to read, "Your committee cannot see the propriety



of the above resolution being acted upon by this court. We, therefore humbly recommend, that nothing farther be done in relation to it, inasmuch as, Synod is not apprized of the necessity of any Declatory Act." As thus amended, the recommendation of the committee was adopted.

Mr. Houston was, by vote of court, added to the committee on the Theological Seminary. Mr. Wylie obtained leave of absence till Monday.

Resolved, That a committee of three be appointed to devise and report to Synod at its present sessions, some more efficient plan for conducting the education of young men preparing for the ministry until the Theological Seminary be resuscitated. Scott, Dr. Willson and Steele were appointed.

Paper No. 2. was taken up and read. This document contains harsh strictures on resolutions formerly passed by Synod respecting the American Colonization Society, and prays for their expunction from our minutes. On motion, the memorialists had leave to withdraw their paper. On their refusal to withdraw it, it was

Resolved, That the paper be returned. It was returned accordingly.

Resolved, That a committee be appointed to report, at the present sessions, on the propriety of publishing another edition of "Reformation Principles." Dr. Willson, Sproull and Renfrew were appointed.

Adjourned to meet to-morrow, at 9 o'clock, A. M.

Same place, 11th Oct. 9 o'clock, A. M.

Synod met and constituted—All the members present except J. B. Johnston, Sproull, Wallace, and S. M. Willson, all of whom appeared in their seats soon after. Minutes read.

Mr. Sloane was called upon to submit his paper on the "Magistrate's power *circa sacra*." It was read and referred to the writer, at his own request, to make some corrections, and return it as soon as practicable.

The committee on the Theological Seminary reported.—The report was returned with instructions to enlarge it.

The committee on "The Signs of the Times" reported; report accepted, and referred to the same committee, to enable them to prepare and report "Causes of Fasting and Thanksgiving."

The committee on Discipline reported in part. Report accepted. Moved and seconded, that in room of the report we adopt the following resolution, viz: That the farther consid-



oration of the memorial from three R. Elders of the Greenfield session, be indefinitely postponed. The resolution was adopted. Adjourned to meet on Monday, 13th inst., at 10 o'clock, A. M.

*Same place, 13th Oct. 10 o'clock, A, M.*

Synod met and constituted. All the members present except Renfrew, Toner and Wallace. Minutes read. Mr. Wallace took his seat. The committee appointed to report a more efficient plan for conducting the studies of young men preparing for the ministry, reported. Renfrew and Toner appeared. The report was accepted, and on motion, considered article by article. The several articles were adopted with amendments. The Moderator intimated his dissent from the adoption of the 3d article, and requested it to be recorded. The whole report, as amended, was adopted as follows:

1. Young men intending to prosecute the study of theology shall have graduated in some respectable college before they be admitted as regular students under the care of presbyteries. Except in cases where Presbyteries in view of particular circumstances may order otherwise. In such cases, presbyteries shall report to General Synod at its first meeting on the premises, and be held responsible.

2. And shall have obtained a competent knowledge of the Greek and Latin languages, of Mathematics, Natural and Moral Philosophy, Logic and Belles Lettres, and have made some progress in the study of the Hebrew language, church history, natural theology, and the evidences of the christian religion, all of which shall be ascertained by examination before presbytery.

3. On application to presbytery for admission to the study of theology, presbytery shall be furnished with certificates, or other satisfactory evidence, that the applicant is in the actual membership and communion of this church, and has completed the twentieth year of his age.

4. No Student shall be licensed to preach the Gospel until he shall have completed four years regular study, counting from the time of his admission by Presbytery.

5. Presbyteries shall order young men under their care to prosecute their study under the direction of such ministers as presbyteries may appoint.

6. That members of presbyteries having students under their charge, shall conduct their studies in the follow manner. Ecclesiastical history, Biblical criticism, and Didactic theology. The course of Ecclesiastical history shall include the



whole period of the church down to the present day, embracing the histories of Mosheim, Milner, and especially the history of the Covenanted Church, since the reformation. The course of Biblical criticism shall include a critical reading of the whole Scriptures in their originals, with a careful perusal of some standard authors on this department of study, such as Campbell's preliminary dissertations to his translation of the Gospels, Horne's introduction to the critical study of the Scriptures, Lowth's dissertation prefixed to his translation of Isaiah, and Lowth on the Poetry of the Hebrews. To these may be added some standard works on the best method of Sermonizing, such as Claude on the composition of a sermon, and the Arch Bishop of Cambray on Pulpit Eloquence.

The course of Didactic Theology, shall include an enlarged reading of the best writers, such as Witsiu's Economy of the Covenants, Turretine's System of Theology, Calvins' Institutes, and the works of Owen.

On these different branches of study, members of presbyteries, having the charge of students, shall direct them to prepare essays and discourses at short and regular periods. Essays shall be read, and Discourses delivered.

7. Each student shall deliver to presbytery two Discourses annually on such subjects as presbytery may prescribe, which discourses shall be exclusive of those delivered on trials for licensure.

8. At one of the regular meetings in each presbytery, there shall be an annual examination of such students as may be under its care. This examination shall embrace the subjects of study during the preceeding year.

9. These Regulations shall not effect students already on trials for licensure, nor, so far as it relates to admission, such as are already under the care of Presbyteries.

10. These regulations shall supersede all former, until the resuscitation of the Theological Seminary.

The committee on Discipline reported in full. The report was accepted and, after several remarks, recommitted.

Adjourned, to meet to-morrow, at 9 o'clock, A. M.

*Same place, 14th Oct. 9 o'clock, A. M.*

Synod met and constituted. All the members present, except Renfrew, Toner, Wallace, J. R. Willson, and S. M. Willson, all of whom came in soon after. Minutes read.

The committee on the Theological Seminary reported.— Report accepted and, on motion, the farther consideration of said Seminary was postponed till next meeting of Synod.



The committee on "The Signs of the Times" reported. Report accepted and, on motion for its adoption, was considered paragraph by paragraph. The several paragraphs were adopted with amendments, when the motion for adopting the whole report was agreed to. It is as follows.

## CAUSES OF FASTING.

There is much in the existing state of things, whether it relates to the world generally, or to the state of religion, which calls for mourning and humiliation in the sight of God.

The general aspect of society at present is, as it has hitherto been, far from encouraging in a moral and religious point of view. Gross immorality prevails, especially in our great commercial cities, impiety and irreligion abound : and a spirit of practical infidelity pervades society in all its ramifications, and influences it, in all its relations. This noxious principle seems to be loosening the moral bonds which unite and hold together the social fabric and fast breaking down the foundations upon which society rests.

Among professors of religion generally, false and dangerous opinions are far from being rare : on the contrary, erroneous views on the grand and leading points of christianity abound to an extraordinary extent. In extensive districts of our country Socinianism and Arianism with the other heresies which always accompany these corruptions of the Christian religion, are almost the only forms in which it is professed. Arminionism, in its grosser aspects, is avowed and propogated to an alarming degree; and Hopkinsian doctrine which unfolds some of the worst features of the tenets of Pelagius and Arminius fills the length and breadth of the land, poisoning the minds of men and alienating them from the love of Divine truth, and the simplicity of the Gospel of Christ.

Whole sects wearing the Christain name are thus arraying themselves against the truth of God, or changing it into a lie. And these are in most cases characterised by a zeal and activity that might do honor to a better cause ; but which, when thus employed, only enlarge the grounds of mourning before God. Popery prevails to an alarming extent, and has become so powerful that the political parties in the country appeal to its votaries for support.

The nation still continues to set itself in opposition to the Lord and His anointed. The authority of God is disobeyed, and the claims of Messiah are rejected. "Vile men are high in place," and, independently of the Divine promise, there is no prospect of the nation's returning to a sense of its duty by vowing allegiance to the God of Heaven, and submitting to the Lord Jesus Christ "the Prince of the Kings of the earth." Their conduct says "who is the Lord that we should obey Him?" It is not to be concealed that the obligation of the revealed will of God is not only excluded from the consideration of men in power, as it respects all matters connected with civil rule and administration of justice, it is despised and deliberately cast from them. They do not set God before their eyes. As a nation we ought to tremble, for He who cannot lie hath said "the nations that forget God shall be turned into Hell."

Great national injustice is committed as it respects the legal sanction which is still given to the exceedingly sinful practice of Slavery. Avaricious men, in despite of the law of God, deal in slaves as if they were mere cattle; they commit an outrage on the image of God; and the supreme law of the land does not only wink at the provoking sin, but, ah! "tell it not in Gath," it sanctions and supports the heartless and unfeeling practice! Even professing christians are aiding and abetting the abominable practice, and the law removes not, but binds the heavy burden on the oppressed, whom God hath commanded to be made free.

The Lord's day is exceedingly profaned. This sin is rapidly growing, and assuming the unpleasant feature of a national characteristic. In no part of the preceding history of this country, it is presumed, has the profanation of the Lord's day prevailed to such an alarming extent as at the present.— This sin has certainly much increased during the past year; and is a painful and distressing symptom of the growth of immorality and irreligion throughout the land. Stage Coaches, Steamboats, and private Vehicles are busily employed in carrying either men of business or of pleasure on the Sabbath of the Lord our God. And the sin is made particularly national, by the carrying of the Mail on this day, and the management of the whole Post Office Department. Thousands are thus required by law, and oath of office, to desecrate the Sabbath, instead of spending it as a day of holy resting.

The desecration of the Sabbath in this way, gives a pub-



lic and authorised example on the part of the rulers of the land, which must have a baneful influence on every part of society, the natural result of which is the rapid increase of Sabbath profanation, to which reference is made in the preceding part of this remark.

To these mournful aspects which the present time displays, may be added the deep and violent political animosities, which have agitated the land during the past year, furnishing fuel to the furiously excited passions of the human soul, thus adding immeasurably to the vast accumulation of national transgression.

While looking at the signs of the times, we ought not to lose sight of our own moral and religious condition, as a part of the household of faith. With us there are sins against the Lord our God. The gospel and its ordinances have not been followed by an adequate improvement. The fruits of righteousness have not been equal to the means of religious improvement with which we have been furnished. Nor have we manifested that deep sense of gratitude which we ought to feel and exemplify in our conduct because of the loving kindness of God.—Our love is comparatively cold, and our fruits of holiness comparatively small. There is, indeed, much of the form and outward show of religion, with, in many instances, we fear, but little of its power.

## CAUSES OF THANKSGIVING.

While we have reason to unfold the roll of iniquity, and to humble ourselves because of our own sins, and the sins of the land in which we dwell, that the Lord our God may heal our backslidings and love us freely—we would also make mention of the loving kindness of the Lord which we have experienced during the past year, and of the favorable symptoms which the present time exhibits, notwithstanding much that it offers of a very distressing kind.

The past year has opened up to the prospect of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in the United States, a view incomparably more delightful than any she has beheld for many years before.

Peace and harmony which had been banished from her courts are again restored; strife has ceased, and all her offi-

cers meet now to attend to the concerns of the house of God, under the prevailing feeling of kindness towards one another.

The good order of the Church is restored and preserved in a considerable degree, and discipline where it had been neglected is revived, and more faithfully and more impartially administered.

The tide of angry and strongly agitated feeling, which for years had been breaking in upon the peace of congregations, and which more lately had severed the bonds of brotherly love among the members of the church, has now subsided. The moral hurricane which threatened to lay waste our Zion, has passed away; and we are now admitted once more to the peaceful repose of christian communion and love.

The ordinances of religion, public, social and private, are more carefully and punctually attended to. The present, is evidently a time of reviving from the presence of the Lord; the spirit of christian activity, which had for some time been slumbering to a very sinful degree, is now in part, awakened; and we have reason to hope that the Spirit of life will still descend upon us in His blessed fulness.

Among the favorable symptoms of the present time, we would not overlook the spirit of inquiry which has lately been revived. There is now a strong disposition manifested by the members of the church, to inquire for the good old way, so as to walk therein. They appear anxious to increase in knowledge, and especially in that of the distinguishing principles of the church. Knowledge of correct principles is evidently on the increase.

When we look beyond the boundaries of the Reformed Presbyterian church, here too we find grounds of thankfulness. The vice of drunkenness, although it numbers many whom it has ruined, or is ruining, is not by any means so prevalent as it has been in past times. Efforts which have been made to encourage temperance, and restrain from the use of Ardent Spirits, have been successful in as large a degree as we could have contemplated. We no longer find in respectable society, men tempting, and being tempted by one another in the common and familiar use of intoxicating liquors.

It is gratifying to find in some of the other denominations of christians, a testimony for the doctrines of Evangelical religion. Although this testimony bears but a small proportion to the heresies which are zealously promulgated, yet we would not despise the day of small things. We cannot refrain from



expressing our gratitude to the Head of the Church, that in his providence, he is directing the public mind to a consideration of the sin of slavery, existing in this land under the sanction of *constitutional law*. Nor would we omit to mention, that the Associate Synod, after much discussion, has prohibited Negro slavery, making it a censurable offence in that denomination, to hold their unoffending fellow creatures in involuntary bondage.

Nor in this enumeration of the signs of the times, would we be unmindful of the propitious change that has been made, and is now making, in reference to the General Assembly. A more determined stand in behalf of truth has been taken by many. The "Act and testimony" with other public documents, evince that while loose views and sentiments on religious subjects are prevalent, nevertheless there are some who are not only willing to support the truth of evangelical doctrines, but who also came boldly forth before christian society with an explicit testimony.

The good hand of God is apparent in his providential dispensations relative to the state of public health. Although his arm has been still stretched over the land in the awful judgment of Cholera, yet its ravages have not been so great and desolating as in a former year. For these and other reasons, it becomes us to adopt the language of Scripture; and under a deep sense of God's goodness to say "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies."

The Synod appoints the third Thursday of December, 1834, to be observed by all the people under our care, as a day of Thanksgiving; and the third Thursday of March, 1835, as a day of Fasting.

The E. S. Synod reported No. 8. Accepted and referred to the committee on Synodical and Presbyterial reports. The following are extracts.

"The Eastern Subordinate Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian church, respectfully reports that we have held one meeting since August last. We rejoice in saying that no appeal, nor any case of discipline came before us. So quiet was the state of the church in our region, that we had little else to do than to hear the reports of our Presbyteries, and



dispose of Licentiates and unsettled Ministers among our Presbyteries.

Our Presbyteries report the several congregations to be in a flourishing state, ordinances duly observed, and generally increasing, in number, and, as is believed, in attachment to our principles and increase of piety. There has been an unexampled call for ministerial help. Though we have had at our disposal, most of the time, four unsettled ministers, and three probationers, yet we have had no adequate supply. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper has been dispensed in most of our vacancies—in some of them twice. In the bounds of the Southern Presbytery, five calls have been granted during the past season, and there are *eight vacancies* in the bounds of our Synod, ripe for settlement, and calling for ministerial labour. In this there is a striking contrast between our condition and that of our former brethren. According to the best of our knowledge, they have not one vacancy in our bounds capable to support even a missionary for six months. They have many young men under their care coming forward to the ministry without the most distant prospect of settlement in their communion, who must necessarily seek a living in some other.

Since the division in August, 1833, they have lost certainly, three of their ministers, and a fourth has retired from the public ministry, while we have to record, to the glory of our God, that not one of our ministers or probationers has turned away from our communion, or manifested the most distant disposition to do so.

The present struggle in the General Assembly church has had a salutary effect upon ours in the North. The orthodox among them are employed in advocating the maintenance of their standards. They look with approbation upon those among us who refuse to recognize as honest members, men who subscribe the standards, and trample them beneath their feet: nor is it improbable that our steadfast adherence to the standards of the church, and determination to resist men of the most influential character when making encroachments, may have produced some effect in their honest struggle for their confession and its doctrines.

The Northern Presbytery has licensed a young man and sent him to Lower Canada, to co-operate with Mr. McLaughlin, a missionary from Scotland. How he has succeeded is not yet known; but it is hoped that his labour will not be in vain.



We have only two probationers in our bounds, and one unsettled minister who is able to travel. Our demands for preaching are great, and we earnestly solicit all the aid in your power.

All things considered, our church in the North has never been in a more flourishing state. We are far from being discouraged. The storm has spent its strength, and passed by. Peace is in all our borders. Our sessions, Presbyteries and Synod meet, transact business, and part in the utmost harmony, and we endeavor to live in peace and friendship with our former brethren, while we utterly disapprove of their unhappy defection.

That the blessed Head of the church may preside in your judicatory, and that your deliberations and decisions may tend to the divine glory, and the church's good, is the earnest prayer of your Brethren in the Lord."

The committee on Finance reported. Report accepted, and on motion, adopted. The report states, that the Treasurer's account is upon examination found correct—and that they have received for defraying the travelling expenses of Ministers and R. Elders \$233 34, which amount they have distributed to the members according to their respective distances.

A petition signed R. Lusk, was presented, No. 9.

It was read and referred to a special committee of three.—The Moderator referred the appointment to the court. Court appointed the Moderator, M'Kee and Gemmil. S. M. Willson and Houston were added. Resolved, That the committee have power to call for persons and papers.

Adjourned, to meet at 3 o'clock, P. M.

*Same place, 3 o'clock, P. M.*

Synod met and constituted. All the members present.—Minutes read.

The committee to whom was referred the petition of Mr. Lusk reported. Report accepted. On motion for its adoption, after various explanatory remarks, in which Mr. Lusk was heard, the farther consideration was deferred for the present.

The committee on Discipline reported on the paper re-committed to them on yesterday. Report accepted. On motion for adoption, the report was considered paragraph by paragraph. The several paragraphs in the preamble were adopted.

Adjourned to meet to-morrow at 9 o'clock, A. M.



*Same place, 15th Oct. 9 o'clock, A. M.*

Synod met and constituted. All the members present.—Minutes read. The consideration of the report of the committee on Discipline was resumed. The several remaining paragraphs were adopted with amendments. The Moderator requested his dissent from the adoption of the first Resolution to be marked. The motion for adopting the whole report as amended was agreed to. The report is as follows :

“Whereas the Rev. G. M'Millan has been active in preparing and publishing a Document, entitled a “Circular,” which contains views contrary to the doctrines of this church ; which calls in question the order of our supreme judicatory and other courts, and which asperses the conduct of some of our ministers ; And,

Whereas he has neglected, though regularly notified of the time and place of meeting, for fifteen months to attend on his own presbytery, and has also neglected to attend meetings of the supreme and subordinate synods ; And,

Whereas his declarations and conduct in the Ohio Presbytery, caused that court to resolve, that he had by his “own act and declaration disqualified himself, for the present, for co-operating with his brethren in transacting Presbyterian business,” which resolution this Synod approves ; And,

Whereas his conduct since, instead of removing his disqualification, has presented it in a still stronger and clearer light ; And,

Whereas there is reason to fear, that, Mr. M'Millan's object in various late manœuvres, is to gain time for the accomplishment of purposes hostile to the interests of this church, and prejudicial to the maintenance of their solemn vows by the unsuspecting members of the congregation to which he ministers ; And,

Whereas it is considered inexpedient, under all the present circumstances, to defer acting in his case until the presbytery having jurisdiction over him, can adjudicate thereon, therefore

Resolved 1st, That the Rev. G. M'Millan be required immediately to submit himself to the Ohio Presbytery ; otherwise he is hereby prohibited from exercising his ministerial office.

2nd, That the whole case be referred to the Ohio Presbytery, to take order thereon, and terminate it as in their judgment they shall find best.



3d. That the case of Mr. Cooper be referred to the same presbytery, with similar instructions."

The committee on the publication of another edition of "Reformation Principles" reported. Report accepted and on motion, adopted as follows:

"The committee ——— report the following resolutions:

1st. That another edition of "Reformation Principles" be published as speedily as possible.

2nd. That the "Historical view, &c." be continued down to the present time.

3d. That a collection for the purchase of paper be taken up in all our congregations, on the next day of Thanksgiving."

Resolved, That as it is understood, the committee are prepared to report a draught of the continuation of the "Historical View," they be called on to submit it. Dr. Willson read the draught. It was accepted and referred to a committee to report thereon. Steele, Cannon, S. M. Willson, Gemmil and Sterrit are the committee.

The paper read by Mr. Sloane, at a former sitting, on the Magistrate's power *circa sacra* was referred to a committee consisting of Scott, M'Kee and Crozier, to report thereon.

Adjourned, to meet at half past 2 o'clock, P. M.

*Same place, half past 2 o'clock, P. M.*

Synod met and constituted. All the members present.— Minutes read. Moved and seconded, that when this court adjourn, it be to meet in Pittsburgh on the first Wednesday of October, 1836, at 7 o'clock, P. M. A division being called for, the first part of the motion—naming the place—was adopted. The second part was adopted.

The report on the petition of Mr. Lusk was taken up and considered farther, article by article. The several articles were adopted with amendments. Mr. Lusk was interrogated as to his sorrow for the course which he had pursued. His answers were highly satisfactory. He also expressed entire submission to the court in the Lord.

The whole report was farther amended, and as amended, adopted, as follows, viz.

"Resolved 1st. That as the papers &c. of Synod, to which Mr. Lusk refers in his petition, are not forthcoming, therefore this Synod cannot enter into an investigation of the merits of the case; but do, nevertheless, assume the correctness of the former decision; inasmuch as that decision was predicated upon Mr. Lusk's declinature.



2nd. That forasmuch as Mr. Lusk, notwithstanding the decision of the court, did, for some time, continue to exercise the duties of the ministerial office, as though no censure had been inflicted, thereby leading one of our congregations into an act of rebellion; Mr. Lusk cannot be restored to his former standing, without a Synodical rebuke.

3d. That upon Mr. Lusk's submitting to said rebuke, he be, and thereby is, relieved from the suspension, under which he is; but, as a precautionary measure, he is ordered by this court not to exercise his office till directed by the Ohio Presbytery.

4th. That as a *fama clamosa* exists against Mr. Lusk, since his declinature, the Ohio Presbytery be directed to take the earliest opportunity of investigating the case and deal with Mr. Lusk according to the laws of the house of God."

The Moderator called Dr Willson to preside in carrying into effect the third resolution of the above report. The throne of grace was addressed—the rebuke administered, and the suspension removed.

The Moderator stated, that circumstances in his family rendered imperatively necessary his return home. Leave was given. Rev. S. M. Willson was chosen Moderator *pro. tempore*.

Resolved, That "Covenanting" from 2 Kings, 11. 17. be the subject of the opening sermon at next meeting, and that Mr. Blackwood be the Moderator's alternate.

Blackwood and Sterrit obtained leave of absence, the latter on account of ill health.

Adjourned to meet at half past 9 o'clock, A. M. to-morrow.

*Same place, 16th Oct. half past 9 o'clock, A. M.*

Synod met and constituted. All the members present, except Crozier, Toner and Renfrew. Minutes read. Toner and Renfrew appeared.

The Pittsburgh Presbytery asked and obtained leave to present a supplement to their report.

Scott, Sloane and Cannon were appointed a committee to prepare and report, at next meeting, a set of rules for the regulation of Fellowship meetings, making the rules of our sister Synods in Europe the basis.

The Pittsburgh Presbytery presented the supplement to their report. Accepted and referred to the committee on Synodical and Presbyterian reports. It is as follows:

"The Presbytery of Pittsburgh beg leave farther to report,



—That the Rev. Jonathan Gill, whose name we formerly reported as stricken from our rolls, has been, according to the good order of the house of God, restored to membership in our court, and as such, is reported to General Synod.”

The committee on Synodical and Presbyterian reports reported. Accepted, and on motion, adopted as follows.

“On a review of the reports of our inferior judicatories, there is much ground of gratitude to the Head of the church, for his goodness to the people under our care, since the last sessions of this court. There are about forty congregations, either now supporting, or able to support pastors, besides numerous smaller vacancies. We have also six licentiates, that have been labouring in the cultivation of the heritage of the Lord. There appears to be an increasing attachment to the whole doctrines of the Gospel, embraced in our subordinate standards, more zeal for the cause of God, and more holy walking with God, in attendance on all the ordinances of the Gospel. The congregations and all the judicatories are harmonious in co-operation for the advancement of the prosperity of the city of the Lord. All the churches are increasing in numbers, knowledge and strength. None of our ministers or licentiates have abandoned us, since our last meeting, nor have there been any symptoms of declension from the testimony of Jesus. Many of the people who had been led away by the dissimulation of some who seemed to be pillars, have returned as soon as they perceived the objects of those who have gone out from us. Among those who have returned and been restored to the fellowship of his brethren, from whom he had for some time separated himself, we mention with pleasure, the Rev. Jonathan Gill, who has been again received into the Pittsburgh Presbytery.

It appears that the old standard works of the Reformation are sought after, and read by our own people and by others.

There have also been reported some painful events. Several ministers of the western subordinate synod, having confederated with the suspended ministers, have been excluded from the Pittsburgh and Ohio Presbyteries, parts of whose congregations have been led away from their duty by their former pastors. Many and great evils still continue to prevail in the land.

Your committee do not think it expedient to recapitulate, what must be familiar to all the members of the court, nor have they any measure to suggest, as founded on the interesting documents that have been referred to them.



We recommend that Mr. Walkinshaw be assigned to the Pittsburgh Presbytery, and that Mr. M'Kinney be directed to spend two months, this fall, in the bounds of the Eastern subordinate Synod, and after that to be assigned to the Ohio Presbytery."

Resolved, That the several sums reported to Synod, as raised by congregations under our care, be published in our minutes.

The committee to whom was referred the paper on the Jury Act reported in favor of its publication in "overture."—Report accepted and adopted.

The committee to whom was referred the draught of a continuation of the "Historical View, &c." reported. Reported accepted and after some amendment was adopted. The following is an extract.

"That the document be committed to a committee of three, to revise it; in order to its publication in the next edition of Reformation Principles exhibited."

Chrystie, Dr. Willson and Roney were appointed the committee contemplated in the above report.

Adjourned, to meet at half past 2 o'clock, P. M.

*Same place, half past 2 o'clock, P. M.*

Synod, met and constituted. All the members present, except Cannon, Foster, Crozier, J. B. Johnston and Renfrew. Minutes read. The absent members appeared, except Crozier.

Scott, Chrystie and Gemmil were appointed a committee to prepare and report, to next meeting of Synod, a revised draught of the Book of Discipline, and a draught of Church Government, with forms of procedure appended.

Roney, Chrystie and Houston were appointed a committee to superintend the publication of "Reformation Principles."

Resolved, That the above committee be directed to annex appropriate texts to the several sections of the chapter on adoption, and that they take the "Historical View" from the edition of 1807.

M. Roney was appointed to prepare and present, to next meeting of Synod, a paper on the Arminian controversy, as a piece of the "Argumentative part of our Testimony."

Resolved, That our Terms of communion be published, as an appendix, in the next edition of "Reformation Principles exhibited."

Resolved, That the committee appointed to superintend the publication of said edition, be directed to enquire, whether



the words "and the only rule of faith and manners" ever formed a part of the first article in our Terms of communion, and if so, to have them inserted before publication.

Upon enquiry as to the means by which the expenses of publishing our last minutes were defrayed, the former Clerk presented the following schedule.

"Proceeds of publication,	\$108 75
Cost of do.	71 00
Received by Clerk at your order,	25 00
	<hr/> 96 00
Balance in favor of Synod's fund	12 75"

Resolved, That in all the congregations under our care, subscriptions for the contemplated edition of "Reformation Principles," be taken, which subscriptions shall be paid in advance, to be refunded by the work when published; and that all our ministers and licentiates be ordered to carry this arrangement into effect.

Roney, Gibson, Scott and Houston were appointed to prepare and publish the minutes.

Gibson and Scott were appointed to superintend the publication of the paper on the enforcement of the Jury Act, as an overture, in connexion with the minutes.

Resolved, That it be ascertained for what number of copies, of minutes, &c., persons present will pledge themselves. The result was,

Cannon 32, Foster 12, Houston 40, N. Johnston 10, M'Kee 8, Patterson 20, Renfrew 30, Roney 25, Scott 12, Sprouli 40, Steele 24, Toner 30, Wallace 10, J. R. Willson 32, S. M. Willson 20, Wylie 20.

The following preamble and resolution were adopted.—Whereas in times past, the plans for publishing our minutes have been, in some respects, inefficient. Resolved, That it be a standing rule in this court, that each member of Synod come prepared to state how many copies he will take, paying the amount in advance. Mr. Foster obtained leave of absence.

Adjourned, to meet to-morrow, at 9 o'clock, A. M.

*Same place, 17th Oct. 9 o'clock, A. M.*

Synod met and constituted. All the members present, except Mr. Crozier. Minutes read and amended.

The committee to whom was referred the paper on the



Magistrate's Power *circa sacra* reported in favor of its publication in *overture*. Report accepted and adopted. The publication was committed to the committee, appointed to publish the paper on the Jury Act. Mr. Crozier appeared.

Resolved, That the law, allowing compensation to the Clerk for official services, be and hereby is repealed.

The committee on Foreign correspondence reported draughts of letters to the Irish and Scottish Synods respectively. These letters were accepted, approved, and ordered to be forwarded.

Resolved, That this court express its thanks to the Rev. Dr. Bruce, of the Associate church, and his congregation, for their kindness in granting to Synod the use of their church for holding its sessions, &c.

Resolved, That this court express the satisfaction which was given by the sermon preached at the opening of Synod.

A motion for adjournment was adopted. The minutes were read, and the court adjourned, with prayer and singing the 133d Psalm, to meet as above appointed.

Attest. MOSES RONEY, Clerk.

Pittsburgh, 17th Oct. 1834.

The following contributions have been made, *agreeably to Synod's direction*, by the congregations named.

### TO THE TRAVELLING FUND.

Chambers street, New-York	\$29 60	Craftsbury	\$10 50
Sixth street, New-York	24 28	Beaver and Camp Run	10 00
Philadelphia	22 50	Baltimore	10 00
Coldenham	20 00	Brush Creek	10 00
Pittsburgh	18 78	Salt Creek	8 00
New Alexandria	18 00	Greenfield	4 50
Newburgh	16 50	Xenia	2 50
Conococheague	12 00	White Lake	2 18
Monongahela	12 00	Miami	2 00

*To the fund, for support of superannuated Ministers.*

Philadelphia	\$24 64	Monongahela	\$10 00
Chambers street, N. Y.	22 03	Pittsburgh	10 00
Coldenham	20 00	Greenfield	6 25
Newburgh	20 00		